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Inventors: Van Eyk and Arrell  
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In the Claims:

Please add the following new claims:

16. The method of claim 1 wherein MLC1 phosphorylation is increased by modulation of a phosphatase that acts on MLC1 phosphorylation.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein MLC1 phosphorylation is increased by modulation of a kinase that acts on MLC1 phosphorylation.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein the increased MLC1 phosphorylation occurs at one or more of residues Thr64, Ser194 or Ser195 of human MLC1.

19. The method of claim 1 wherein the increased MLC1 phosphorylation occurs at one or more of residues Thr69 or Ser200 of rat MLC1.

20. The method of claim 1 wherein the muscle protective agent identified protects against muscle damage caused by cardiomyopathies, hypertension, or free radicals.

21. The method of claim 1 wherein the muscle protective agent identified protects against muscle damage caused by ischemia, hypoxia, or ischemia/hypoxia with reperfusion.

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-15 are pending in the instant application.